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A PERSPECTIVE ON GAY LIBERATION

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A PERSPECTIVE ON GAY LIBERATION

By John Bannon and Brian Bennett

Acknowledgments: In the section on the nature of gay oppression in particular we have borrowed heavily from two sources, both in terms of paraphrasing and direct lifts, without in most cases giving source credits. The two sources are the documents of the Red Butterfly, which was a Marxist collective within the New York Gay Liberation Front, and "Answers on Some Questions on Gay Liberation" by David Thorstad, SWP DB Vol. 29, No. 12, June 1971 P.6.

Introduction

The purpose of this document is twofold: 1. to discuss the 1971 CC Plenum Report on Gay Liberation, and 2. to expand on certain questions, in particular on the nature of gay oppression and the revolutionary potential of gay liberation -- about which, despite the best intentions, the majority of comrades not familiar with the gay scene are really not knowledgeable. The latter is inevitable but it is a serious obstacle to an informed discussion.

There is much in the plenum report that is positive: the recognition of gay liberation as an integral part of the current radicalization; the rejection of the myth that homosexuality is some kind of aberration, neurosis, etc., and the proposal that the movement give educational and propagandistic support to gay liberation.

But the report also contains serious deficiencies. These can be divided roughly into four areas: (1) The Report does not give comrades any real idea of the nature and scope of gay oppression, (2) an overly cautious and in some instances negative approach, exemplified by a disproportionate emphasis on what we should NOT be doing in the gay movement, as opposed to what our direction should be, (3) the Report does not refute some "arguments" opposing our support of gay liberation, and (4) factual inaccuracies.

only serious criticism it seems to me

In fairness it should be pointed out that some of the shortcomings of the Report are attributable in large part to the considerable pressures on the comrade who authored it, the limited amount of time available to the Plenum to discuss this issue, and the fact that no discussion preceded the Plenum; this was the first time that the Central Committee, as a body, had the occasion to discuss gay liberation. As well, becuase of last-minute changes in the agenda, it was not possible for any gay comrades having an overall picture of the gay movement to attend the session at which

 = only serious criticism it seems to me

the report was discussed. All of which doesn't minimize the deficiencies in the Report, but explains part of the reason for them.

Aside from the fact that this document is mainly directed to open a serious discussion, and does not attempt to be definitive or comprehensive, one other important limitation should be noted. It is written predominantly from a male gay perspective; it would be presumptuous for us to ~~make~~ any pretense of dealing with the situation of gay women except in terms of some fairly obvious generalities.

Before getting into the main questions, we want to comment on some inaccuracies in the report, then take up some misconceptions* and/or disguised prejudices which can be used as "arguments" against our movement's support of gay liberation. (* Insert:— about homosexuality and the gay movement -)

Some Inaccuracies in the Plenum Report

1. "For Marxists the question of sexual repression and homosexuality is not new." If it is correct to say that Marxists have had a general analysis of sexual repression in terms of relating this repression to private property relations and class stratification. To say however that homosexuality is not a new question for Marxists is simply not true. Even Wilhelm Reich, for example, did not have a correct analysis of homosexuality. This is hardly surprising, since he did not have the necessary data to make such an analysis. Nothing resembling a rounded Marxist analysis of homosexuality and the oppression of gays emerged until the development of the contemporary gay liberation movement, and this was done primarily, to the best of our knowledge, by Marxists, who at the time were not part of the organized revolutionary socialist movement.

The significance of the fact that the first workers state eliminated repressive laws against gays should not be underrated. It cannot be implied, however, that this historic step was the result of a clear understanding of the issues involved. Did the Bolsheviks have a correct analysis of homosexuality and gay oppression? To our knowlege, no such analysis exists. On the contrary, Reich states, in relevant sections of The Sexual Revolution (Fourth Edition, revised, 1969, Double day) that even among the leadership of the Bolshevik party, let alone among the rank and file membership, there was a serious lack of understanding of the importance of providing conscious direction in the struggle to wipe out the warped, ~~destructive~~ sexual norms of ~~pre-revolutionary~~ times.

Chicherin Social Democracy during ~~Russian~~ Scandals re German military & Royal family not looked upon as an important political issue – no gay movement as today

Page2 = Chicherin *(Bolshevik leader,1917 Russian Revolution)* Social Democracy during scandals re: German military & Royal family not looked upon as an important political issue - no gay movement as today

true — but that was not the position

To be in favour of eliminating anti-gay laws does not necessarily imply a correct analysis of gay oppression. One could hold the totally unscientific notion that gays are "sick" and still oppose repressive laws on the basis that they they are unenforceable, discriminatory, the wrong way to approach the question, etc.

When we come to consider our own movement in Canada, the question of homosexuality and gay oppression certainly is new. Up until very recently the vast majority of comrades were totally ignorant of homosexuality and gay oppression. Consciousness of this question was limited to a relative handful of (usually) leading comrades and even there, for the most part, understanding was far from full or comprehensive -- even among gay comrades.

2. When the Plenum report states that "We have never been faced with any particular problem concerning homosexuality..." it is unfortunately dead wrong. There's been a problem, certainly, but the movement as a whole has not been conscious of it. The problem has been our inability to recruit gays, or, if recruited, to hold them on a long-range basis. Over the years a number of gay comrades left the movement and others came very close to leaving. Of course, in some cases where comrades dropped away, there were reasons other than, or in addition to, the fact that they were gay.

In the past we had no stated (or even generally understood) position on recruitment of gays, on homosexuality or gay oppression. Consequently gay comrades were almost as uptight about being open concerning their sexual orientation as they would have been in any other predominantly straight organization. In addition, as would be expected in these circumstances, there was anti-gay prejudice in the movement -- although considerably less than any other organization or movement ---and this was sometimes, although not often, openly expressed.

This situation meant, among other things, that gay comrades were unable to integrate their work in the movement and their social and sexual life, frequestly leading to feelings of isolation in, and alienation from, the movement.

To reply to this by saying that some straight comrades find themselves in the same position, although true, shows a lack of understanding of what gay oppression is all about. Yes some straight comrades have that problem; all gay comrades we're aware of have had it. Even where comrades managed to live with these contradictions, their

efficiency as revolutionists was impaired. This is stated simply as an observation.

As the movement becomes more conscious of the oppression of gays in this society, this situation will be ameliorated and this has already happened to a considerable degree. It is difficult to predict whether it can actually be eliminated. The revolutionary vanguard is not, and cannot aspire to be, a microcosm of the future socialist society; conceptions that lead in this direction are nothing but a variety of petty-bourgeois utopianism. It is useful, nevertheless, that comrades are aware that such problems exist. That in itself is a big step forward. In any event, it is a qualitative advance over pretending that no problems exist.

3. The description in the Plenum report of the formation of Toronto Gay Action (TGA) is factually wrong. The Activists' Caucus in the Community Homophile Association of Toronto (CHAT) was not "encouraged" to leave; it was voted out by a general membership meeting. The circumstances surrounding this will be dealt with later. The main point here is that the way the Report reads, it could be construed by comrades to mean that we led some kind of split from CHAT. The opposite is true. We attempted to persuade the militants to stay in CHAT and fight for a mass action perspective. When this question was first posed, however, we had some initial doubts about what position to take. This may be the reason for misunderstanding on this point.

Some misconceptions about homosexuality and some "arguments" against our support of gay liberation

While we believe few, if any, comrades hold the following misconceptions or positions, it is necessary to deal with them from two points of view.

While no one (to our knowlege) is at present expressing opposition to our support of gay liberation along these lines, some of them have been expressed previously. More importantly, they are fairly common, even among some so-called Marxists, and comrades should be aware of them and be able to deal with them.

It is also a fact that frequently, though not always, those who are most upset about open homosexuality are "closet queens" (people who are predominantly gay and, even if admitting it to themselves and acting on their feelings, are afraid of admitting this to others, and go to great lengths to appear straight) or straights who are unable to accept homosexual feelings in themselves. This is a

personal hang-up which cannot be part of a political discussion as such. But the personal and political frequently overlap. We will leave it at that, except to note that some of the following are frequently rationalizations of an inability to consider the question of homosexuality and gay liberation objectively and without emotionalism.

(To paraphrase a comment in one of the Red Butterfly documents: it is an absurd contradiction for people to apply the scientific method to politics and economics and then turn around to search for their sexual attitudes in the trash-heap of Judaeo-Christian mythology.)

1. Homosexuality is an illness.

While receding in influence, this concept is still popular with large numbers of psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, etc. Homosexuality has possibly been the object of a greater outpouring of pseudoscientific quackery than any other single issue.

A devastating exposure of the kind of methodology employed by these "scientists" is contained in The Gay World (by Martin Hoffman, Bantam, 1969 --"The Disease Concept of Homosexuality" pp. 154-163.)

Hoffman comments at one point that it's obvious that these people (such as Irving Bieber, Edmund Bergler, etc. ad nauseam) don't employ the scientific method; he wonders if they've eve heard of it.

The stock in trade of these types is to take a series of "case histories" of homosexuals who come to them for treatment, conclude that they are all sick, and that therefore all homosexuals are ill! Needless to say, gays who go to psychiatrists are no more a representative cross-section of the gay population than are heterosexuals who seek psychiatric help. (Perhaps less so, since gays are justifiably more suspicious of psychiatrists in the first place.) Using the same "logic" we could presumably conclude that all people who eat hamburgers are neurotic; or, of course, ... that all heterosexuals are ill.

It's not a question of such psychiatrists not being acquainted with scientific methodology, of course. It is just that to employ it would overturn their preconceived prejudices, as well as deprive them of some of their bloated incomes. The fact that they are reduced to arguments which border on imbecility rests in the function of a science perverted to serve the interests of bourgeois society. Psychiatry of course is no more immune to this process than

economics, political "science", history, anthropology, sociology, or any other area.

In Homosexual Behavior in the Human Male (Prentice Hall, 1967) Wainwright Churchill points out that everywhere the word "sin" occurs in the lexicon of Judaeo-Christian "morals", it is replaced in psychiatric jargon with terms such as illness, perversion, deviancy, neurosis, etc.

This is not to debunk psychiatry in general (as some ultralefts do). It is simply to recognize that as Trotskyists, we should be the last to fall victim to some mystique about "what the scientists say".

The statistical incidence of homosexual behavior in itself negates the myth that it is a rare "disease" confined to a few "contaminated" areas.

Here are some pertinent figures from the famous Kinsey studies of sexual behavior in the U.S.:

50% of American males have been conscious of specifically erotic responses to other males.

37% have had at least one homosexual experience leading to orgasm.

18% have had at least as much homosexual as heterosexual experience for at least a three year period between the ages of 18 and 65.

28% of American females have been conscious of specifically erotic responses to another female.

13% have reached orgasm from at least one homosexual experience.

(The reasons for the reported incidence of homosexual behavior among women being so much lower than that of men remain unclear. Yet it is legitimate to speculate that it is at least partly, if not predominantly, a result of the specific oppression of women. For instance, the study also reports that between 14% and 19% of unmarried women and 1% to 3% of married women were classified as <u>not responding erotically to either heterosexual or homosexual stimuli.</u> (emphasis added)

Some comments on the figures: 1. The Kinsey studies involved 5000 men and 6000 women, using a study design of great sophistication; the studies are regarded almost universally as being authoritative. 2. Kinsey repeatedly cautioned that, because of the repressive attitudes toward any and all forms of homoeroticism, the figures are, if anything, lower than actual incidence. 3. The fact that 50% of American males are reported as not being <u>conscious</u> of

homoerotic feelings does not necessarily mean that their homosexual component never surfaced. Fear of being labelled "queer" or of recognizing yourself as that can and does produce suppression of memory. Further, as is well known, all human beings have feelings and desires which may never emerge on a conscious level. As well, given the antihomosexual bias of this society, it is also legitimate to speculate that questions of this nature may not have been answered with complete frankness by all of the respondents. All of which applies to the figures on women as well. 4. While statistics comparable to those of the Kinsey studies do not exist in Canada, there is no reason to think that an identical survey here would produce significantly different results.

There is ample material published which demonstrates conclusively that homosexuality has been a significant component of sexual life in all human societies and that in fact western capitalist society is one of the few forms of society that makes no provision for it. Homosexuality has been documented in nearly all higher mammalian species as well as some species of birds.

Homosexuality, far from being an aberration, is simply a component part of the human sexual continuum. The figures demonstrate that the vast majority of people are neither exclusively straight nor exclusively gay, but fall somewhere in between. The evidence seems to point to the conclusion that humans at birth have an undifferentiated sexual capacity, i.e., exclusive heterosexuality and exclusive homosexuality are not innate, but the result of social conditioning.

Put another way, the capacity for gay sexuality exists in nature and is just as much a part of basic human sexual capacity as straight sexuality. (This is the meaning of the slogan "2,4,6,8 -- Gay is Just as Good as Straight!")

2. Heterosexuality is somehow superior to homosexuality.

This idea rests on a number of false assumptions. One is that people are basically heterosexual. There is no scientific evidence at all to support this contention, as comforting as this belief may be to some heterosexuals who are particularly uptight about gays. That the majority of people "think" this has exactly the same significance as the fact that at one time the majority also believed the earth was flat.

Another concept is that predominant homosexuality in individuals is the result of the early inhibition of heterosexual development. Freud, while emphatically rejecting the idea that homosexuality was an illness (and thereby rejecting also the ideas that it could be "cured") held this position. Obviously underlying it is a conscious or unconscious acceptance of the first assumption discussed in this section. It is impossible to square this idea with the fact that nearly all gay people have had heterosexual experience, in many cases, extensive heterosexual experience preceding their first gay experience(s).

The idea that homosexuality is a distorted form of sexual expression that takes place when heterosexuality is denied free development is likewise false. Homosexuality is no more a distorted aspect of sexual behavior in class society than is heterosexuality. ALL forms of sexuality are distorted by the puritanical and irrational norms of this society.

People who like to use terms like "natural" and "unnatural" to lend credence to fallacious arguments put themselves in the ridiculous position of having to explain why heterosexual intercourse performed with contraceptives in natural (although is does <u>not</u> occur in a "state of nature") while homosexuality is not (although it <u>does</u> occur in a "state of nature").

There is, finally, another idea, closely allied to that dealt with in the preceding paragraph. This is dealt with in the following quotation from "Answers on Some Questions on Gay Liberation" by David Thorstad (SWP DB Vol. 29, No. 12, June 1971 p.6):

"The idea that human beings are physically equipped for heterosex but not for homosex. According to this teleological view, a penis was designed to go into a vagina and consequently heterosexuality is superior to (and more natural than) homosexuality. This is the prevailing view in our society.

"It has two weaknesses. First, it ignores the practice of other kinds of heterosexual behavior than genital intercourse (such as oral-genital and anal sex). Second, it assumes that the physical structure of the human body, not the degree of pleasure or imagination involved, determines the enjoyment of sex. (People who resort to this foolish argument thus find themselves in the absurd position not only of passing judgment on a form of sexuality with which they are unfamiliar, but of tryingto explain why heterosexual sex is fun despite the fact that a man's chest is not built to receive a woman's breasts.)"

Homosexuality is no better and no worse than heterosexuality. It is simply a fact.

3. Homosexuality is petty-bourgeois, etc.

The main reason to deal with this kind of absurdity is that it is used by some left-wing bigots to rationalize their anti-gay prejudices.

The assertion that homosexuality is petty-bourgeois is never accompanied by any evidence, which is not surprising, since none exists. Quite the opposite. Kinsey's statistics suggest that, if anything, homosexuality occurs in slightly greater proportions in the working class than in other social layers.

This idea, along with a couple of others that are equally absurd, when it comes from alleged marxists, is traceable to the triumph of Stalinism in the Soviet Union.

One of the others is that homosexuality is "a product of decaying societies" (in this case capitalism éThis garbage is still being peddled by the Stalinists. Homosexuality has existed (or exists) in societies since the beginning of human history: in primitive communist societies like that of the American Indian,in societies at the peak of creativity such as Hellenic Greece, societies in decline (ancient Rome), advanced capitalist societies and post-capitalist societies.

Perhaps the most asinine idea (which goes along with the above) is that homosexuality has some connection with fascism. On the contrary thousands of gay people were murdered by the Nazis; they were herded into Hitler's death camps marked with a pink triangle, the special insignia for gays.

4. Homosexual seduction is a threat to "minors".

There is no scientific basis for the extremely common and persistent notion that seduction is a significant determinant in forming the sexual orientation of individuals. The factors that enter into the process of determining this are far too complex to be reduced to such a simple explanation.

The number of gay people whose first sexual experience was through heterosexual seduction, on one hand, and the number of predominantly heterosexual people who have experienced homosexual seduction on the other, should be sufficient to demonstrate that. No one, for example,claims that the many people whose first sexual experence was through heterosexual seduction go on to develop a predominantly heterosexual orientation because of that experience.

The concept that homosexuals are "child molesters" is simply part of the anti-homosexual mythology of this society. If anything, "child molesting" is more common among heterosexuals. It further ignores the fact that many "minors" (people under 21 years of age in Canada, as far as this arbitrary legal definition applies to consensual homo-sexual acts) are quite capable of taking the sexual initiative not only with their peers or youger people, but with older persons as well.

This question may seem esoteric, but it is not. It is something that the movement will have to deal with at some point. The idea that you have to be a certain age to enjoy sex is puritanical, irrational and absurd. Revolutionists can concede nothing to this reactionary concept.

5. Gay liberation alienates the working class.

It is true that revolutionists cannot ignore the fact that the working class is contaminated with the prejudices fostered by bourgeois society on all kinds of questions. But it is not the task of the vanguard to capitulate to such divisive prejudices, but to fight against them.

How and when to do so is a tactical question related to given objective conditions. It would have been artificial and possible counterproductive to do this on the issue of gay oppression before the emergence of the gay movement.

Given the emergence of this movement, however, it is our principled responsibility as revolutionists to support and defend it, independently of how we evaluate its potential and whether or not decide to carry a major intervention in it. Trotskyists support the struggles of all oppressed peoples against this system; we do not temporize our support of this or that struggle because of an alleged degree of prejudice among workers.

Let's be quite clear about the bjective character of the "argument" in existing circumstances. It is opportunist. It is equivalent in principle to soft-pedalling our support of the struggle for an independent and socialist Quebec in English Canada, or to downgrading our press coverage of women's liberation because of the backwardness of large numbers of male trade unionists on this question.

The majority of workers in Canada are not only not convinced of the necessity for a socialist revolution or are even hostile to the idea; they are not yet convinced of the

Page10

(part 5) = but we have to decide what we fight on – meaning how! POLITICS yes

(5th paragraph) = Yes, how we defend it – what weight (we give it) but of course we do (defend it)

(6th paragraph) = ? abstract, meaningless in life, (a) principle perhaps. This is important to us – in fact in some ways we have given too much coverage – at anyrate it involves 30 odd%

(This paragraph) reveals the formal logic of their thinking

necessity of (independent) class politics, as is evident by the fact that the two capitalist parties still pick up the vast majority of working class votes. This doesn't lead us to abandon our commitment to the goal of socialism. On the contrary, knowing the reasons behind this relatively low political consciousness, we remain confident of our ability to win the masses of workers to the struggle for a socialist society.

Certainly there is pervasive and deep-seated anti-homosexual prejudice among workers. To assume that such prejudice will translate directly into opposition to gay liberation is unwarranted.

This kind of assumption is mechanical and formalistic. It ignores several important factors, not the least of which is the impact that gay liberation will have in dispelling societal prejudice.

You sometimes hear comrades say, in referring to such prejudices, that people "think" this or that about homosexuals. The point is that until now, most people have never thought about this question (or for that matter all kinds of other questions) at all. They have lacked the information and/or opportunity to do so. All they have had to go on is their prior indoctrination in the sexist ideology of this society. Gay liberation will force re-examination of these attitudes.

The above assumption also ignores the sheer magnitude of gay people in the working class. Ten per cent of the people in Canada are more or less exclusively gay. That is approximately two million men and women, the vast majority of whom are workers.

It also ignores the fact that all workers are sexually oppressed by the warped norms of this sex-repressive society. You don't have to be gay to understand that gay liberation will help break down sex-typing and stereotypes which dictate the compulsion to prove your "masculinity" or to prove that you are really "feminine". It has been our own experience that many straights have their ideas about gays significantly changed when they discover that someone whom they like and respect is gay. As gay liberation encourages more and more gay people to "come out" fully (that is, disclose their sexual orientation publicly) it will become increasingly difficult to uphold the many caricatures and stereotypes that are a key part of bourgeois sexist ideology concerning homosexuals.

Page 11

(2nd paragraph) = "opposition" = prejudice

"directly" = true it won't – on this basis; gay liberation action tends to cut into prejudice – opens up the question particularly among other activists

(5th paragraph) = but are they coming out of the closet

"Ten per cent" = where does this figure come from

6. The 1969 amendment to the Criminal Code legitimatized homosexuality in Canada.

It did nothing of the kind. As a matter of fact, it did nothing to materially alter the situation of gay people. Anyone who thinks that is did just has no idea where things are at.

In legalizing "homosexual acts between consenting adult in private" the government simple recognized the unenforceability of the existing legislation as it stood and the fact that prosecution of "consenting adults" for sexual acts in provate had been practically a dead letter for many years. At the time the amendment was first posed (then) Metro Toronto police chief Mackey publicly stated support for it, openly stating that the cops had a policy of NOT enforcing the law in this particular respect. In this context, the amendment was simply altering the law to conform with existing practice.

Important nonetheless

The fact that the government proceeded with the amendment did of course signify a certain modification in the intensity of antihomosexual sentiment and is almost certainlyattributable at least in large part to the current radicalization. Beyond that, it has no significance except perhaps as a cheap, demagogic gesture to the gay population or to buttress the "democratice" pretensions of the capitalist state.

The Nature of Gay Oppression

The Plenum Report says very little about this. This would be fine if we could assume that comrades are generally familiar with the subject and/or have read other material. We cannot realistically proceed on that kind of assumption.

Because our press coverage has tended to concentrate on the legal aspects of the oppression of gays, and the Report could well be read in a similar way, it would be understandable if the main aspect of gay oppression is seen as taking place on the legal plane. In fact the legal aspects of gay oppression are only a pale reflection of the total picture.

Basically, there are two aspects of legal discrimination against gays. One is the existence of a number of laws which are specifically anti-gay or which are theoretically neutral, but are used predominantly or exclusively to victimize gay people. (Appended to this document are a list of the demands made in the brief to the federal government presented by the August 28, 1971

demonstration in Ottawa. This will give comrades some idea of legal discrimination against gays in areas of federal jurisdiction. We have added explanatory comments where we felt they were required.)

The other aspect of anti-gay bias in the laws is that we simply do not have the same rights which, at least in theory, are accorded to other minorities or to heterosexuals in general.

Two of the most crucial of these are lack of protection from discrimination in employment and housing. Exclusion from public places or services (such as bars, restaurants, etc.) is also practiced, although not as universally.

The biggest club used against gay people is occupational exclusion. Very few jobs anywhere are open to known homosexuals. Any gay person who discloses his/her sexuality at work stands a high risk of being fired, of being placed in a sufficiently oppressive atmosphere that they are forced to leave, or almost certainly of being denied promotion.

We cannot pinpoint this statistically because very little of it (as of gay oppression in general) is out in the open. A partial exception to this exists in the case of the federal civil service(see demands 3 and 9 in the appendix). No one knows exactly how many gays are fired from jobs every year in Canada, denied promotion, etc. But the number is certainly considerable and it is unquestionable that the vast majority of gay people are afraid of losing their jobs ifthey disclose their sexual orientation or it is found out.

We will include a couple of examples here of this facet of gay oppression. While to our knowlege there are no written regulations, we know for a fact that the Ontario civil service has a well-understood policy of denying promotion to gay people. For another, it is virtually excluded that anyone in teaching could hold down their job if it became known that they were gay.

This is a direct form of economic oppression, more accurately, of double oppression -- the majority of gays are not only exploited as workers but suffer the additional anxiety and insecurity of knowing that their livelihood is in jeopardy if their sexual orientation is disclosed.

Discrimination in housing is another form of economic oppression, although perhaps less direct. Gays who are fairly open about their lifestyle are generally limited to overpriced (and not infrequently substandard) accomodation in or bordering the gay ghetto, usually located in the downtown core of major cities.

"Coming out" in the fullest sense also threatens social and personal relationships -- immediate family, relatives, straight friends, fellow students, fellow workers, fellow members of organizations, clubs, etc.

Gays also face the possibility of physical attack (sometimes even murder) and/or blackmail by police and other hoodlum elements, emboldened by the notion that "queers" are not really human beings. While many, if not most gays (at least in this country) may never actually encounter this kind of situation, the threat is there for all those who do not elect to remain completely in the closet.

This is a result of the fact that in our society, the only acceptable sexual norm is that of exclusive heterosexuality. Homosexuality is condemned in all ages and both sexes. That this norm represents a total distortion of basic human sexual capacity does not prevent it from inflicting incalculable suffering on masses of human beings, with immeasurable loss to society through wasted human potential. The massive amount of energy invested in indoctrinating society with this norm (as with sex-repressive attitudes in general) suggests its central importance to the maintenance of the status quo. By briefly touching on how this is accomplished through various social institutions, we can begin to indicate the scope of this conditioning and the rationale behind it.

In "our" society, the patriarchal nuclear family is the first institution most people encounter and it is pivotal in forming personalities. This is where sexual response is learned (and distorted), by a process which is still not fully comprehended. The family is usually the starting point for anti-gay attitudes. It normally fosters male supremacy; the inferior, dependent status of women; artificially enforced sex roles and sex-typing of personality characteristics, according to which males should be aggressive and females passive, etc. Sexism begins here.

The anti-gay attitudes initially learned in the family are reinforced by the educational system. Distinctions between "masculine" and "feminine" roles and activities are enforced and stereotypes of male and female behavior

Page14 = "acceptable" = is this not being modified
'does not prevent' = results in
"most people' = we all

are heavily promoted. "Education" on homosexuality (if it takes place at all) bears the brunt of heavy negative conditioning. Since the school system affects development from childhood through adolescence, its impact is immense.

Religious mythology is also a major component of enforcing gay oppression, because of its still not inconsiderable influence over the lives of many people. It also reinforces the sexist ideas fostered by the family and schools and helps infuse attitudes toward homosexuality with a pronounced sense of guilt and anxiety.

Federal, provincial and municipal governments reflect and enforce gay oppression through anti-gay laws, the absence of civil liberties legislation to protect gays, police harassment and entrapment, persecution within the military and job discrimination.

Businesses, whether large or small, enforce conformism and anti-gay prejudice primarily through job and housing discrimination, Gay people are also nearly universally ripped off by overpriced bars, clubs and other meeting places, films, books, magazines, clothes, etc. It is also a fact that many gays who refuse to live a double life are reduced to being perennially unemployed or else taking low-paid, unskilled jobs in large-city ghettos.

The bourgeois mass media almost univerally buttress and promote a negative image of homosexuals and homosexuality, particularly in reinforcing mythical caricatures and stereotypes.

This is especially true of the film and TV industries. "Boys in the Band" (for those who may have seen it) is a typical example of this kind of brainwashing, in which an atypical (and singularly hung-up) group of male, middle class New York gays are presented as "the homosexual". We could cite countless other examples. It is hardly surprising that uninformed straight people are considerably influenced by this kind of trash because alternatives are few and far between.

Gays in this society experience savage social and psychological oppression. If we decide to come out fully, we face heavy social and economic sanctions, as well as possible legal harassment.

Gays who stay in the closet (as the vast majority do at the present time) are forced to develop a somewhat

Page15
(4th paragraph) = --gays who make a principle of declaring their sexuality establishing their sexuality – not just out of the closet, but (who) make (it) an issue – demonstrate
(bottom) = What does out of the closet mean? There are heterosexuals who make a great thing out of their masculinity – see-thru shirts, wide belts, hair, etc, etc, button flies, the usual heterosexual accepts the clothes that are defined as male –but without demonstrative characteristics – same with gays – a gay who doesn't proclaim his sexuality, is he still in the closet (?)

schizophrenic lifestyle. They experience a split between what they feel toward members of the same sex and what is socially acceptable. They soon become experts at self-censorship, at inhibiting feelings and responses to avoid being "read" as gay.

Because of immense social pressures, many gay people have great difficulty in experiencing sexuality as a positive force. Sex becomes a split off from productive life and large aspects of social life, draining off energy in repression, and frequently leaving a sense of being not quite together. Most gay people tend to live two lives. There is a felt opposition between feeling and socially-approved activity. The anti-gay pressures of this society force upon homosexuals unique forms of personal and social alienation.

Not the least of these is the fact that great numbers of gay people experienceconsiderable problems relating to self-image and self-esteem. After all, if you're continually bombarded with propaganda telling you that you're sick and inferior, it's not surprising if you begin to believe it to one extent or another. The anti-gay bias of our culture results in the fact that many gay people suffer deep feelings of guilt and anxiety (at least initially) in relation to satisfying their sexual needs. This is reflected in the number of gay people who seek psychiatric "help", depersonalize sex as much as possible or try to avoid it.

It is also reflected in the difficulty many gays have in forming lasting personal relationships, especially with other gays. Another aspect of this is that if you're straight you at least have the advantage of knowing what is socially expected of you; what the rules of the game are.

If you're gay, there are no rules to follow; you have to figure out your own scene the best you can. This can lead on the one hand to compulsive adaptation to straight norms (which, ironically, do not work out very well even for vast numbers of straights) such as one-to-one, monogamous relationships, frequently including the jealousy, possessiveness and role-playing that this kind of relationship in our society often entails or on the other throwing the idea of any kind of lasting relationships out the window altogether.

Almost certainly the cruelest and most vicious form of oppression is suffered by young gay people in public and high schools, where they are trapped by dependence

on parents, are forced to continue attendance by virtue of legal sanction and are at the mercy of a bigoted educational bureaucracy. In addition to this, public and high school students also frequently go through several years of brainwashing with the same group of peers. As one of the documents put out by Red Butterfly asks, rhetorically, "The adolescence of a gay person ... have you ever had to laugh at a joke ridiculing what you are?" or think you are

A great deal more could be said, obviously, but we think this is enough to give comrades at least some concept of what gay oppression is all about.

What we have said, we believe, applies at least generally to gay women as well as gay men. Gay women are, however, doubly oppressed, both as women and as lesbians. In general, gay women do not face the same degree of legal harassment as gay men (although there is some police harassment) but it would be entirely wrong to conclude from this that they are somehow better off.

As we have demonstrated, legal harassment is only one aspect (and not the most important) of gay oppression. As a gay women panelist at the forum in Toronto last fall expressed it, gay women are more totally put down than gay men in the sense that society refuses to take the idea of a viable relationship of a sexual nature between two women seriously. It should also be noted that in terms of places to meet and socialize, gay women are universally restricted to a far greater degree even than gay men. Within the gay ghetto, lesbians are probably as much victims of sexism as they are in society at large.

publicly by dress, declared lesbians out of closet?

Gay opression is just as integral a part of the apparatus of sexual repression in capitalist society as is the oppression of women. Arguments to the effect that since gays (at least male gays) are not oppressed in such directly economic ways as women (for example, women form part of the reserve army of labor; gays, as such do not) that somehow gay oppression is less real. Such notions betray what can only be called an "economist" concept of oppression.

Of course all oppression in this society flows basically from the private property relations of capitalism. It is not true however that all aspects of oppression are expressed directly on the economic plane as such, or in any event necessarily find their major expression there. It is ridiculous to think that the phenomenon of alienation can be reduced simply to a matter of dollars and cents; such ideas are mechanical and anti-dialectical.

Page 17 = publicly by dress, declared lesbians out of closet?

Let's take an example with some similarities. Our movement recognizes the oppression of students as students. Students are not in general systematically and scientifically exploited on the economic plane as are full time members of the work force. Does this make their oppression any less real? To ask the question is to answer it.

Gay oppression, then, is just as real and substantial as any other form of oppression. Understanding this fact is crucial to any attempt to make an intelligent and objective evaluation of the potential of gay liberation.

The Revolutionary Potential of Gay Liberation and Some Points in the Plenum Report

While the section of the plenum report on "Comparisons with the Women's Liberation Movement" makes points of differentiation between gay liberation and women's liberation having some validity, it misses the main point. Not only are these two movements inextricably related to each other; it is impossible to assimilate the full implications of one without understanding the other.

The essential thrust of gay liberation is identical to that of women's liberation: control over our own bodies and lives. Both aim at the heart of the sex-repressive institutions of this society, most specifically the nuclear family as a socially-enforced norm.

While the most obvious function of sexual repression in this society is specifically economic -- that of enforcing the norm of the nuclear family so that the whole burden of reproducing itself is thrust upon the working class, it is false to think that that's where it ends. Sexual repression is also a key means of rendering people fearful, docile and subservient to their oppressors, of instilling a lack of confidence in their ability to control their own lives. If you spend tremendous amounts of energy trying to conform to society's warped and rigid stereotypes of a "real man" and a "real woman" (as both most straights and closeted gays do) you will have precious little left for the struggle against the society that imposes these definitions.

In our estimation, gay liberation has the same potential for restoring confidence to hundreds of thousands of homosexuals in this country as women's liberation has of accomplishing that for potentially more than half our population. Such confidence is one of the key subjective ingredients of which revolutions are made. Even in the case of gays who may never become directly involved in gay liberation as such, they may well be inspired to greater combativity in other areas, as workers, as students, as women, as Blacks, Indians, etc.

This is why we find somewhat incomprehensible the fact that the plenum report seems to question the significance

Re Reich however - awareness of sexual repression is at the same time a big factor in revolutionizing many (is the) thesis of this document I would gather

Women oppressed by the mere fact of their sex - about which they have no control. Homosexuals by their concept of their sexuality - they can or not stay in the of course if they stay they suffer if they do they suffer

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(end 6th paragraph) = Reichian – however, awareness of sexual repression is at the same time a big factor in revolutionizing many (is the) thesis of this document I would gather

(bottom) = Women (are) oppressed by the mere fact of their sex –about which they have no control. Homosexuals by their concept of their sexuality – they can (stay) or not stay in the in the (public eye) of course if they do stay they suffer ...

of the slogan "out of the closets and into the streets". Surely the lessons we have assimilated from the nature of the struggle of other oppressed sectors in this society tell us a great deal also about the necessary direction of the gay movement.

It is first of all axiomatic for Trotskyists that oppressed minorities must first organize themselves in struggle before getting into the question of alliances and coalitions. It may "seem logical" that the NDP would move in behind gay civil liberties, but it is simply illusory to think that it will do so of its own volition. Up until the emergence of the gay movement, even revolutionary Marxists did not as much as give lip service to gay civil liberties. Certainly the NDP has never recognized the existence of homosexuality, let alone proposed to do anything about the oppression of gays.

It has taken the emergence of an independent movement in the streets to move the NDP at all on the question of women's liberation; it will take the same development before there can be any hope that the NDP will give even token support to gay civil liberties.

In any event, civil liberties do not equal liberation, either in the case of women or of gays. The essential dynamic of both these movements is toward human sexual liberation, without which talk about the real liberation of humanity is meaningless. The full goals of either can not be achieved in the framework of the capitalist social order.

Further, the sheer magnitude of gay people in the population indicates that gay liberation can appeal to very large numbers of people. It may be legitimate to speculate that, because of the less explosive character of the radicalization in Canada as compared to the U.S., the tempo and scope of gay liberation here may be comparatively limited. However, this is also true of other independent mass-oriented movements, especially the anti-war movement.

To say however that "Certainly at this point a perspective of masses of people coming 'out of the closets and into the streets' is not at all likely" is sheer speculation and is not warranted. If a serious and sustained campaign had taken place in the gay movement to organize a mass demonstration around a central issue, resulting in a very modest turnout, there would be justification in making a tentative assessment along these lines. No such campaign has taken place.

Perhaps this statement tends to reflect the evaluation placed by some comrades on the August 28, 1971 demonstration in Ottawa -- that the turnout was "modest". That evaluation is false. Given the proportion of gays in the population relative to that of women, and the fact that

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(top) = in what way does it question slogan? It doubts that a movement will develop
(paragraph 5) = true BUT can they be mobilized as important forces for the revolution – or will revolution decree liberty

Yes — a key point - inhibiting the development of a movement — have a choice: closet or not. I would say a gay can find personal satisfaction with liberalization — No woman can.

gays have potentially far more to lose by being publicly identified, the number that came to Ottawa was not at all modest compared to either of the women's liberation demonstrations that have been held there. Aside from anything else, the women's demonstrations had the full backing of our movement and its resources, which the gay demonstration did not.

Should we give equal + full backing — that is the question!

Not that we should get into overgeneralizing from a couple of demonstrations of course; we do not mechanically guage the impact of movements from the size of one or two particular demonstrations. You only have to listen to the radio, watch TV or read the bourgeois press to come to the obvious conclusion that thousands upon thousands of women who have never had the remotest connection with the organized feminist movement have been deeply influenced by its actions and demands. Similarly, while anti-war sentiment is higher than ever, the organizational base of the movement is numerically small and politically narrow.

Our movement recognizes that the women's liberation movement, organized on an independent, non-exclusionist, single-issue, mass-oriented basis is capable of winning important concessions from the ruling class. There is no reason whatever to think that this will not be true of the gay liberation movement organized on the same basis. In today's situation, the concept that gay liberation is something that can be relegated to a post-revolutionary milennium is just as antiquated as the concept held by the U.S. radical movement up until the mid-1920s that the oppression of Blacks was just another facet of working class oppression, that there was nothing unique about it, that little or nothing could be done short of a revolution and that therefore there was no point in discussing it.

what is US experience on this

The gay movement in the U.S. has demonstrated that gays can radicalize and be mobilized in significantly large numbers on the issue of their own specific oppression and that gay militants can be won over to revolutionary socialism. We do not believe that there is any reason to think that the situation in Canada will be significantly different. However, the plenum report in places tends to suggest, although never explicitly, that there are differences of some weight.

We are not aware that the laws in Canada are particularly more "liberal" than those in the U.S. -- with the exception of the omnibus bill amendments to the Criminal Code -- although that may be the case. It is probably true that police harassment and sentencing of gays in the U.S. is generally more severe than it is here. This is of questionable significance. The legal situation of gay people is by no means the most important or fundamental aspect of gay oppression. In that context

legal situation - the law + its enforcement would be very important

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(top) = Yes – a key point – inhibiting the development of a movement – have a choice: closet or not. I would say a gay can find personal satisfaction with liberalization – No woman can

(2nd paragraph) = should we give equal and full backing – that is the question!

(4th paragraph) = what is the US experience – ask them (the SWP)

(bottom) = legal situation, the law & its enforcement would be very important

it is difficult to see anyone advancing the position that gays are somehow qualitatively more oppressed in the U.S. than in Canada. Even if that were the case, it would be obligatory on the part of anyone citing such a position to attempt to explain what it would mean in terms of the potential of gay liberation, not just to throw it into the discussion.

It would be well to remember that the less explosive character of the radicalization in English Canada is by no means due solely to the channelizing influences of the NDP. In the case of the anti-war movement, the more direct impact of the war, most particularly in terms of American casualties and the draft, is obviously a very big factor.

In more general terms, it seems indisputable that the social contradictions of decaying capitalism are far sharper in the U.S. than in Canada at the present time, although the gap is narrowing. In particular the question of racism is more pervasive and explosive. This, and other factors, have resulted in the fact that, on a day-to-day basis, the U.S. is a far more violent society. This is especially true of police violence, particularly when directed against any and all minorities (except the rich!)

Police harassment of gays seems, both in Canada and the U.S., somewhat related to the attitude of local government and the police force in a given municipality. Harassment and entrapment have been consistent for some time in Toronto, but apparently not in Montreal and Ottawa. (In the case of Ottawa we're speaking of the city cops, not the RCMP.)

Another factor which is injected into the discussion by the plenum report without any attempt at analysis is what is termed the public response to public gay activity.

The response of the population in general, other than that of pathological reactionaries, to gay liberation (if any) remains an unknown quantity. What is cited, to be more precise, is the reaction of the bourgeois media and some students.

It is hardly surprising that the most favorable response to gay organizations is on the campus, where the radicalization is deepest. However the remarks of the former president of Waterloo Universities' Gay Liberation Movement to our conference panel should be put in context. Largely as a result of wishful thinking, a number of gay activists (especially from campuses) tend to exagerate the significance of every friendly response from straight people. This is reflected in the idealist concept that a majority of straights can be freed of their anti-gay conditioning simply by general education. There is also a tendency to mistake the campus for society in general, a tendency by no means confined to the gay movement.

Some considerable truth in this; many earmarks of a prejudice

Page 21

(bottom) = some considerable truth in this; many earmarks of a prejudice (exist)

Whether it is accurate to state, as the report does, that campus gay organizations have been accepted, rather than merely tolerated or ignored is uncertain. It would not be surprising in the least, for example, if most students at U of T are largely unaware of the existence of UTHA on that campus. It is true, however, that at this point there does not appear to be any instances of administrations refusing to recognize gay groups, as has happened in one or two cases in the U.S.

In general, it is true that bourgeois press coverage (at least in Toronto) of gay organizations has been relatively objective. The significance of this, again is questionable. Aside from the Ottawa demonstration most of the activities of the gay movement receiving coverage have been relatively innocuous. Most reportage that we are familiar with has been related to CHAT's social service work and the OYP and LIP grants. How these same newspapers will react to larger and more militant actions in future is something else again. In its present predominant form, the gay movement probably doesn't appear much of a threat to the system in the eyes of the more sophisticated bourgeois papers.

On the other hand, for example, the CBC TV network recently ran an hour-long program, ostensibly on gay liberation, called "Nothing to Hide". This program was full of distortions and slanders and featured the professional anti-gay bigot Dr. Hatterer. As a letter printed in the Jan.-Feb. 1972 issue (No.2) of Body Politic commented, the program should in all justice have been retitled "Dr. Hatterer's Hour." It is our understanding that this prejudiced program is intended for reproduction and use as a movie in school "sex education" programs. This despite the fact that the Toronto gay organizations put pressure on the CBC for an equal-time reply and carefully pointed out everything that was wrong with the program.

There's nothing particularly mysterious about the OYP and LIP grants to CHAT. From its inception CHAT has been heavily oriented to social service work in the gay population. In this respect it performs, from the vantage point of a large number of social agenices in Toronto (who supported CHAT's LIP application) perfectly legitimate and necessary social work. As well its services relieve these agencies of responsibilities that they would probably prefer not to shoulder, inasmuch as they are (like everything else) run predominantly by straights, most of whom are incapable of understanding or relating to gay people. Best of all, from the government's point of view, the grants both tend to have a conservatizing influence on CHAT and also buttress the "democratic" pretensions of the bourgeois state. The Canadian bourgeoisie is not for nothing the offspring of the British ruling class (the oldest and most sophisticated bourgeoisie in the world).

The Gay Movement in Canada

The description of the gay movement as contained in the plenum report is still substantially accurate. Most of the gay organizations began with a predominant tendency toward providing an alternative social milieu for gays and other social services. It is usually not very long however before some members begin to perceive that qualitatively more than this is required, although these social services are in some respects very necessary.

It is perhaps a bit mechanical to divide the groups internally into majority and minority on the question of mass action. Not a few gays in CHAT worked for, supported and were inspired by the first large demonstration in Ottawa. The same is true of the gay contingents Nov. 6 in Toronto, and April 15 in Ottawa anti-war demonstrations. The Nov. 6 contingent, composed of about 25 people was organized on short notice (12 hours) and included several who had never been on a demonstration before, let alone as gays. In most of the organizations with which we are familiar, the mass action perspective vs. that of a liberal-reformist, conciliatory, gradualist orientation has never been very clearly posed and certainly not consistently on a continuing basis. In that sense, it is difficult to state definitively where the majority are at presently.

Since CHAT is the largest and most stable of the gay groups in Canada, it is worth tracing its development. Beginning as a spin-off from the U of T Homophile Association (UTHA) -- because the increasingly large attendance of non-campus gays at its meetings was beginning to threaten UTHA's character as a student organization -- it has grown in little over a year to over 400 currently paid up members. Its largest and most successful astivities are twice-monthly dances which are highly profitable. It also works with various social agencies, sends speakers to high schools, monitors all court cases which might involve gays in the downtown courts, provides legal, medical and psychiatric referrals and maintains a continuous 24-hour phone-in service. Largely, although there are a number of very committed volunteers, this has been made possible by the OYP and LIP grants. At present, CHAT is financing a full-time staff of eight.

While it still largely retains its social-service orientation, and spends a great deal of time lobbying various government and police officials, CHAT has begun to politicize somewhat over the last year. This was reflected in the debate over adoption of its constitution recently. A "women's amendment" was put forward calling for equal representation of women and men on all bodies, including co-chairpersons. This was narrowly defeated, to some extent because of uncertainty

among the women about their own position and tactics. Nonetheless, a motion to accept the principle of the amendment was carried. This was quite significant, given tha t women comprise perhaps 10% of the total CHAT membership. This was carried out in the election of a new executive committee, which was voted in on the basis of equal representation -- five men and five women. This development would have been inconceivable a few months ago. All of which does not signify that the problem of male chauvinism has been overcome in CHAT, but makes it at least possible that the women in CHAT will find their position within it sufficiently viable that they will not feel forced to form their own organization, as has happened frequently in the U.S. gay movement.

While the gay movement began on the campuses, it is interesting that at least in terms of numerical growth the university groups over the past months have tended to mark time, while the off-campus organizations, such as CHAT and the (Montreal) Front de Liberation des Homosexuels (FLH) have grown. Also while we have no definitive news on formation of new campus groups recently, a new off-campus organization was launched with some success last December in Ottawa. One is also underway in Edmonton and reportedly in Hamilton, Winnipeg and Halifax.

This is partly explained by the predominantly social orientation that most groups tend at least to start out with. The U of T Homophile Association was the first campus organization and the precursor of CHAT. Yet it has been relatively weak this year compared with its first year of existence. At least part of the reason for this is that if gays on U of T are looking mainly for a social milieu, there is CHAT which is large, well-organized, close to the campus but sufficiently removed to provide greater anonymity to those who want that; there are also the downtown bars and clubs.

Another problem (one which is constantly found in all campus movements) is continuity of leadership. The groups at Guelph and L ndon, which floundered initially this year, lost their founders and leaders when these people graduated or left campus.

This is not the essential problem however. The reason why the gay movement has not experienced a rate of growth in the past year proportionate to its possiblities is largely the result of programmatic confusion and lack of leadership. We can see this quite clearly in the case of Toronto Gay Action.

The fact that TGA emerged as a separate entity at the time that it did has two primary reasons. While the great majority of the CHAT membership voted initially to support the August 28 Ottawa rally there was local

opposition to official CHAT sponsorship of it by a small right wing minority, concerned primarily with preserving what was then CHAT's virtually exclusive orientation toward social services. They succeeded in convincing a number of not-so-conservative elements that CHAT had to be "for the whole gay community" and that the organization's identification with public demonstrations would scare some people off.

There was also considerable impatience among some of the militants in the Activists Caucus with the bureaucratic character of the CHAT steering committee and roadblocks placed in the way of practical steps toward organizing Aug. 28. Many displayed eagerness to set up a separate organization immediately and become contemptuous of CHAT as an organization. This probably played into the hands of the conservative elements and also tended to let the steering committee (which allowed itself to be stampeded by the tiny minority of right wingers, thinking that these people had a greater following in CHAT than they really did) off the hook. The upshot was that the next membership meeting (which was quite a bit smaller than most others in that period) voted by a margin of two votes that the Activists Caucus should not continue to be officially part of CHAT, but should set up a separate group. At the same time it was made perfectly clear that Caucus participants who wished to remain in CHAT as individual members had every right to do so.

Despite the fact that CHAT, as such, was not willing to be the sponsoring organization for August 28, it nonetheless devoted considerable time, money and resources without which the demonstration would not have been nearly the success that it was. At the demonstration itself, probably 60 people were from Toronto, at least half of them CHAT members who have never been at a TGA meeting even once, This was also true of the hastily organized Nov. 6 anti-war gay contingent and that of the April 15 contingent And despite all the noise about CHAT supposedly not being officially identified with the demo, its president, George Hislop, was one of the speakers at the Parliament Hill rally.

This should be sufficient to show that there are many more gays willing to be involved in public actions than is reflected by the smallness of TGA.

The most striking contradiction in the gay movement at this point is its small organizational base (with the exception of CHAT and possibly the FLH, at least in terms of membership) compared to the interest in gay liberation shown by the remarkable success of Body Politic .

The first issue of this paper sold 2500 copies and

more than paid for itself. The second issue sales were close to 4000, despite the fact that this issue appeared at the worst time of the year in Toronto to sell papers and that Body Politic has a very small number of consistent sellers. The paper is going so well at present that monthly publication is projected in the near future. It should also be noted that sales outside Toronto to date are quite minimal, partly because the paper is refused access to commercial distribution outlets. Bookstores which carry Body Politic have to be individually serviced.

While the paper is of fairly high quality, considering the inexperience of most of the people involved in it, its contents (as comrades who have followed it much must be aware) reflect the programmatic and analytic confusion and eclecticism that exists in the gay organizations.

TGA is a good example of this. The politics of several of the key activists in it, lacking any central analysis and programmmtic direction, tend to zig-zag between ultraleftism and opportunism.

This weakness was inherent in TGA from its inception. The sole unifying objective around which it was formed was the Ottawa rally. Once this had been carried out, the question then on the agenda was of course where the organization would go from there.

This has yet to be solved. Since Ottawa TGA has in essence marked time. A de facto leadership emerged which dispensed with any kind of leadership structure (or even having a chairperson at meetings) as "bureaucratic" or "parliamentary" and which for a period oriented toward small, isolated, unpublicized and unprepared ultraleftist actions. Even when actions having a potential of being mass-oriented (such as the picket of the CBC offices in Toronto) they were poorly organized on very short notice so of course involved the same hard-core activists as the "zaps".

Yet several of these same people, who think of themselves as socialists and revolutionaries, supported a gay Liberal candidate during the provincial election despite the fact that at the time he did not publicly identify himself as gay, let alone campaign on gay issues! At the same time, the leaflet put out by the ad hoc Ontario Campaign for Sexual Equality called in no uncertain terms for election of a majority NDP government.

(As an aside, it is interesting that some of the people involved in Peter Maloney's campaign complained that a lot of gay people in St.George -- which contains most of the gay ghetto in Toronto, therefore having an

extremely high proportion of gay people, possibly even a majority -- refused to vote for Maloney and insisted on voting NDP.

In view of the situation which came about in TGA since Ottawa, it is hardly surprising that most of its meetings consisted of seemingly interminable bullshit sessions which accomplished very little in any direction. As a result of this turnover at meetings has been considerable. While an average TGA meeting consists of 20-25 people, there must be at least 150 who have come to meetings once or twice, got turned off and did not come back. While some may have attended principally out of curiosity, it was obvious also that many were looking for more than CHAT had to offer. They wanted something more than Chat -- probably they didn't know quite what -- but they were looking. Had TGA been involved in some ongoing actions of a viable character, it is virtually certain that it would have experienced significant growth by this time.

On the iniative of ourselves and some newer people, a recent TGA meeting decided to elect a steering committee and to resume holding planned, democratically conducted meetings. This of course does not solve the general political problem, but it does allow these to be discussed in a rational and useful manner. Attendance at meetings has begun to rise again as a result.

Even though the people who formed the previous de facto leadership of TGA tend toward ultraleftism, they are not hardened ultralefts by any means and none appear to belong to any established political tendency. Partly as a result of this however they have a tendency to view the organization as a multi-issue political tendency, although this is not a consciously formulated idea on their part. They were all honest enough to admit that their concept of (non) leadership had been a total fiasco and all of them voted in favor of reverting to a democratically structured organization. So it would appear that there is a better than even chance of winning them over to a consistent mass-action perspective in the long run.

Needless to say, this reflects the fact that the gay movement, like most others has the problem of coming to grips with concepts adapted from the so-called "new" left, idealist and utopian notions such as "counterculture", "personal liberation" through head-changing etc. In TGA these ideas comprise one of the most important ideological barriers to the advancement of the mass action perspective as a central strategy for gay liberation.

There is presently no problem of red-baiting in TGA. On the one or two occasions when this occurred

it was not necessary for comrades to take this up; others jumped in and squashed it immediately. Several core TGA activists (notably those very active in Body Politic) had the experience of being red-baited in CHAT; as a consequence they are strongly opposed to red-baiting in any form.

On the other hand there is, on the part of some, considerable disinterest in and even suspicion of "straight politics". There are two probable reasons for this. One is that the record of the left generally on gay civil liberties has left everything to be desired, certainly in North America. The other is a tendency to identify with "sexual politics" a la Kate Millett and others. Many TGA'ers see the family, for example, as a key repressive institution but, on the other hand, do not have our materialist analysis of the socio-economic origin and class function of the family.

There are also, however, newer people coming around TGA who are open to and interested in our ideas.

This should be sufficient to give comrades a general picture of the gay movement in Toronto. Many of the generalities in this section apply to the movement in other centers as well. But since our experience is essentially limited to Toronto, we have confined ourselves to that experience in terms of dealing with the situation in detail. It should be noted that Toronto has the largest gay population of any city in English Canada and it is to be expected that the gay movement here will be far larger than in any other city; with the potential exception of Montreal in Quebec.

The Question of a Program for Gay Liberation

We are not in a position, at this time, to formulate a rounded program in the area of gay liberation. However, to assert that because of this we have "no program" for this movement is incorrect. It is tantamount to saying that none of the lessons we have learned about other movements, such as antiwar, women's liberation etc., are applicable to the gay movement.

That isn't to say that there are no differences between these movements. One which comes immediately to mind that distinguishes gays as an oppressed sector is that, unlike women or Blacks, gays are a largely invisible minority. We mention this mainly to caution people against making sweeping (and sometimes ill-considered) analogies relating the gay movement to these other movements.

The only basis on which the gay liberation movement can progress is that of a basically nonexclusionist, independent, mass-oriented movement. It is not necessary to restate all the reasons for this approach;

they are no different than for other movements. By way of recent evidence, it should be noted that in the U.S. those groups most closely approximating this model seem to have survived and grown, whereas those which have attempted to be substitute political parties have gone under or drastically declined.

The most immediate and obvious area when c onsidering specific programmatic demands is that of civil liberties. In posing such demands homosexuals are simply asking for the same elementary democratic rights as those accorded, at least in theory, to every citizem of a bourgoise democracy. This is not only clear and understandable to gays, it can also, probably even at the present time, win support from straights who, while on the whole being abysmally ignorant of homosexuality and the oppression of gays, can relate to the concept that everybody should have the same rights.

Civil liberties demands can be broken down into two categories. One is the repeal of all anti-gay laws and laws primarily used to victimize gays; the other is the enactment of legislation to protect gays from discrimination.

As we have indicated, the anti-gay laws are, for the most part, not that widely enforced and rarely are maximum penalties levied. Nonetheless, gays have every reason to feel threatened by the existence of these laws because as long as they are there, they CAN be enforced, simply at the whim of local authorities.

What is most fundamentally important about these laws is that, by their very existence, they legitimatize societal prejudice. That is why repeal of these laws is an important issue, even in cases where they are almost never applied.

The other aspect of the campaign for gay civil liberties is that of protective legislation. At the present time we are advancing the concept of a unified Ontario-wide campaign of an ongoing character to amend the Ontario Human Rights Code to bar discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. This is particular would legally ban discrimination against gays in employment and housing. (see "A Strategy for Gay Liberation" by Brian Waite in issue # 3-March-April-of Body Politic)

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One of the largest problems before the gay movement right now is the lack of a central, unifying issue such as abortion law repeal affords to women's liberation. We feel this campaign could provide just such an issue. Unlike other demands, which may affect only sectors of the gay population, and some sectors indirectly at that, this hits at central methods of the oppression of gays; it is of immediate and direct interest to almost the entire gay population.

We said an Ontario-wide campaign for two reasons. One is that this is as yet the only province where there is a proliferation of gay groups. The other reason is that civil liberties are a provincial jurisdiction. It should be possible to find ways to link up fights to amend the law in the same direction in other provinces at some point in the future, despite the fact that the law varies from province to province and exact formulation of demands may therefore vary to some extent, as well as the timing of particular actions. But a significant campaign in Ontario would provide a powerful impetus and example to gay organizations elsewhere.

A victorious campaign to amend the Human Rights Code would prove a tremendous step forward. The consciousness of whole new layers of gay people would be raised in the process; the movement would experience a qualitative growth in confidence of the power of its numbers. The amended law would of course not end discrimination in jobs and housing, but it would give gays a powerful lever to fight back with. It would sharply cut into the notion that it is entirely legitimate and "natural" to discriminate against gays.

Other demands which have been put forward include that for gay studies programs on university campuses and that sex education programs at all school levels tell the truth about all forms of sexuality, including a positive presentation of homosexuality, and that indoctrination aimed at influencing the sexual orientation of individuals be eliminated.

It is difficult at this point to evaluate the potential rallying power of these last two demands because we have no experiences to go by. In the case of the second demand, this might have tremendous impact in high schools, but any kind of serious campaign around this presupposes the establishment by the gay movement of a viable base in these schools.

The issue of legally institutionalized gay marriages is not one, in our opinion, of any great importance. Most gays are not interested in this, although they do want their relationships treated as legitimate. Nonetheless, where this demand is raised it should be supported. Revolutionary Marxists do not recognize any right on the part of the state to regulate personal and sexual relationships. But it is sectarian to argue from this basis that we should not support the right of gays to legally marry if they wish to do so. Institutionalized marriage will almost certainly remain in existence as long as this system does. That being the case, there is no reason why gays should be denied the advantages of marriage (such as tax deductions, inheritance rights etc.) presently accorded to legally married heterosexual couples.

There is also the question of localized issues, for example police entrapment in a particular bar, etc., refusal of a restaurant or other business to serve gays, etc. These can potentially be valuable in involving people in a very concrete fashion on a day-to-day issue. However, these types of issues are frequently of direct concern only to a segment of the gay population. It is not difficult to fall into the trap of spending disproportionate time and energy on this kind of issue to the detriment of more generalized issues.

There is the question, as in any other movement, of priorities. TGA, for example, lacking both a consistent mass-action perspective and also lacking any real understanding of how to mobilize for larger actions, has tended to drift from action to action with no worked out emphasis,resulting in an almost total lack of direction.

We believe that the main emphasis should be on civil liberties issues, with the greatest emphasis on legal protection of gays against job and housing discrimination. This hits, again, at the most immediate and universal problems facing gay people and has the potential to mobilize maximum forees.

While this does not constitute a rounded program for gay liberation, we believe that it is a sufficient basis for us to intervene to give direction to the movement.

The potential of the gay liberation movement, and the realizability of that potential are inextricably tied into the question of leadership and program and therefore the role of revolutionary socialists. To abstract one from the other, we are sure comrades realize, would be a complete absurdity. Without a generally correct programmatic direction and leadership, the gay movement, like any other, is subject to the almost inevitable pitfalls of ultraleftism and/or opportunism.

Where it exists (to our knowledge at this time only in Toronto) the gay liberation press (i.e. Body Politic) can be a powerful instrument in raising the pride and consciousness of the gay population. It is important for comrades active in the gay movement to utilize opportunities to put forward the mass action perspective in the gay press.

Women in the Gay Liberation Movement

As was noted in the introduction, we do not pretend to speak for gay women -- that will have to be done by gay women themselves

Many comrades have noted, for example, that Body Politic is overwhelmingly male-oriented. This is an accurate reflection of where the movement is at right now. This is due in large measure to the simple fact that women form a disproportionately small component of the membership in nearly all gay organizations. And, of course, there is considerable chauvinism among large numbers of gay men. It would be remarkable if it were otherwise. While it is true that many gay men can overcome their chauvinist conditioning more easily than straight males, simply because they do not sexually objectify women, this does not solve the problem.

To assume that the predominantly male orientation of Body Politic is the product of sexist attitudes on the part of those involved in writing it is not warranted. In fact, the people who are key activists in the paper consciously try to cut across this as far as they are able and strongly identify with women's liberation generally. The problem lies basically in the fact that no women have been consistently involved in this paper. This is an unfortunate byproduct of an objective situation.

Comrades in gay organizations must support any and all efforts of women to achieve real equality in decision making in these groups. Whether or not the best alternative may be for women to form their own separate organizations remains to be seen. In any event, that is their decision, not that of men. As mentioned earlier, recent developments in CHAT raise the possibility that the organization may continue to be able to encompass both men and women; it is difficult to predict the end result. Only further experience will tell us that.

The Role of Trotskyism in Gay Liberation

In this section we want to deal with the specific recommendations of the Plenum report.

First of all, we completely agree that the extent to which our movement intervenes in any of the independent movements of various oppressed sectors is determined by the possibilities that such intervention affords for building the revolutionary party. In that context to raise <u>in general</u> the efficient use of our cadres, the need to prevent unnecessary diffusion of our forces into different areas, is quite correct. However, in the concrete circumstances, i.e., where we have only a handful of declared gay comrades even minimally involved in gay liberation and only ONE involved to any great extent, to pose that this represents some strain on our resources is simply unreal. Certainly it would appear to us that the movement suffers

frequently from chronic overextension of our cadres, especially our staff and at some point we will have to come to grips with that. But that belongs to another discussion.

Further on the question of the possibilities of contributing to the growth of the movement through our involvement in gay liberation, we will repeat, in summary form, our opinion of the potential of the gay movement. It has the potential of involving large numbers of gays, radicalizing on the issue of their own oppression and having tremendous impact on masses of gay people who may never become directly involved. Certainly there are recruitment possibilities for our movement at the present time. These are initially modest, but they will grow with the growth of the gay movement itself.

These possibilities, however, are somewhat conditional on how the Trotskyist movement orients itself toward gay liberation. It will be difficult, although not impossible, to recruit gay militants to our movement, when, at the present time, gay liberation is not really considered a serious work area (certainly not as far as the Plenum report is concerned) and our support of gay civil liberties is posed as almost purely literary.

It is completely false and mechanistic to pose the concept that gays who are potentially recruitable will inevitably come to our movement through other areas of the radicalization. That may well happen in some cases, but it will not be the predominant trend, particularly as the gay movement grows. Especially in the case of young gay people who are in the process of fully coming out, they will radicalize primarily on the focus of their oppression as gays. A good example of that is the case of the gay contingent in the April 15 Ottawa demonstration. Of the nearly 40 people in that contingent, probably not more than five or six would have taken a bus to Ottawa had there been no gay contingent. Gay activists will tend to relate to other areas of the radicalization as gays.

That is entirely logical and it is totally unrealistic to think that it would be otherwise. If some young women joined our movement and showed little enthusiasm for the abortion repeal campaign we would think that was very unusual. It would be equally strang for any openly gay person joining our movement not to want to be involved in some significant way in struggling against his/her oppression as a homosexual. Not that we can make assignments primarily on the basis of comrades' subjective preferences, but to ignore those preferences would be extremely foolish. In fact, the movement has in practice always tried to accomodate comrades' preferences to the extent that this was

compatible with our political priorities, recognizing the elementary fact that if comrades do not find at least major aspects of their work in the movement personally fulfilling, they will tend to become demoralized.

The Plenum report tends to make the implicit assumption that all interventions are equal. This is not necessarily true; there are interventions and interventions. What gay comrades in Toronto have been carrying out is what could be termed a limited intervention. Our proposal is that this limited intervention be continued and that we leave ourselves in a flexible position to deepen that intervention when the time comes that the movement feels that it is warranted.

In that context, it is our opinion that recommendations # 2 and # 3 of the report are incorrect and should be rejected. It is simply not true that we have no programmatic direction to advance in the gay movement. And, it should be added, we have been advancing a general direction with the agreement of the West Toronto branch organizer, who is also a member of the Political Committee and has acted as a liason between the P.C. and the gay comrades. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, we assume that there is no serious disagreement on the part of leading comrades with regard to the role that gay comrades have been playing in the gay movement. Recommendations # 2 and # 3, to put it another way, are not an accurate description of what the movement has been doing in, or its attitude to, gay liberation either prior to or following publication of the report.

These two recommendations, if taken literally, would reduce gay comrades to the status of passive observers in the gay movement. This is obviously absurd; we cannot hope to have any influence in any movement unless we are prepared to play at least a minimally activist role.

The section of recommendation # 3, which says that we are not assigning comrades to the gay movement is, to us incomprehensible. It is a complete departure from the way we handle any other work area. Is it to be left up to gay comrades' individual preferences whether or not they are active in the gay movement? Or is gay liberation not considered a work area? This has to be clarified.

If this is an indirect way of saying that gay comrades are free, for example, to go to CHAT dances for social and personal reasons, this would be equally wrong. Since attending gay social functions has no direct political implications and violates no movement norms, it is the business of individual comrades and of no concern to the movement as such.

Also needing clarification is the statement in recommendation # 2 that we take no "organizational responsibility" in the gay movement. Again, if interpreted literally, we would be reduced to the status of mere observers.

It has to be recognized that there is a difference between being <u>part of</u> the leadership of the gay movement and aspiring to be <u>the</u> leadership. We see nothing wrong in principle for a comrade to be a spokesperson for a gay contingent at an anti-war rally or to take on minor organizational responsibilities that are not overly time-consuming. What we do have to watch out for is that we do not take political initiatives that are not well thought out and discussed with appropriate movement bodies or leaders.in advance.

In essence the main pitfall to be avoided in this respect is the identification of ourselves, as Trotskyists, with positions or actions which the movement cannot espouse. Being <u>part</u> of the leadership of gay movement does not imply taking responsibility for all the statements or actions of a politically heterogeneous organizati on. In any case, as in any other movement, if it is felt that a policy being advanced is politically wrong and one with which our movement cannot afford to be identified, it is simply necessary for comrades who may be members of the organization concerned to clearly dissociate themselves from that policy and, where necessary, resign from any positions they may hold in order to make our position unmistakeably clear.

We cannot agree with the contention that we have to have a complete rounded assessment of the direction and possibilities of a new movement in order to participate in it, or that we have to have a complete and rounded program to advance within it. It is true for example that our movement was engaged in a discussion spanning several years concerning the slogan of an independent and socialist Quebec. In the interim we did not play the role of passive observers, but participated actively in nationalist struggles and engaged in discussions with various independentist currents as we well as vigourously campaigning for the recognition of Quebec's right to national self-determination, although at that time we did not advance the slogan of independence.

To repeat then, we are advocating that we continue to carry a limited intervention of the nature described and that we be open to deepening that intervention as the situation develops. We feel that

otherwise the movement would be missing a very valuable opportunity to get a solid foothold in gay liberation in what is still largely its embryonic stage.

In Toronto and Vancouver, this would include the formation of a gay fraction, with specific comrades assigned to work in gay liberation with regular reports, etc., as in other areas of work.

The formation of a fraction, with <u>periodic</u> fraction meetings, branch reports, etc., is the best guarantee that the first part of recommendation # 4, i.e., that work in gay liberation be under movement direction (with which, obviously, we are in complete agreement) is consistently carried out.

The report notes, for example, that prior to the August 1971 C.C. Plenum our gay liberation work in Toronto was not carried out under the direction of the branch. That is true. However, it was hardly possible for the branch to give any direction, since prior to the plenum, branches were prohibited from even discussing the question. The Toronto gay comrades worked under the direction of a member of the Political Committee. This did not work out very well, as there was great difficulty for that comrade, having numerous responsibilities, to find the time to be involved in regular, let alone reasonably comprehensive, discussions concerning work in the gay movement.

This tended to leave comrades involved in gay liberation in somewhat of a vacuum. While the situation has improved in this respect to some extent, it still holds in the sense that there is no organized gay fraction and branch reports are very infrequent.

Gay comrades in areas other than Toronto and Vancouver should be assigned at least to keep in contact with what is going on. Otherwise we're not even in a position to know what is happening. This is especially true of the several gay campus organizations, about which our knowledge is almost completely second-hand and very sketchy. This of course is really the concern of the YS/LJS.

Certainly we should attempt (as we have done with some success in the case of the anti-war movement) to orient gay militants to other areas of the radicalization, although not necessarily as groups. But it is unrealistic to pose this as the main task.

People who are in the gay movement are primarily interested in gay liberation as such, whatever their political level. If we simply pose the question of relating the gay movement to other areas of the radicalization and have nothing to offer in terms of giving direction to gay liberation itself, we would simply

cease to be taken seriously, and with good reason. This would be somewhat analagous to a participating in a union local and confining yourself to advocating support of the N.D.P. while ignoring basic policy of union policy and leadership.

We are in basic agreement with recommendation # 5 although the emphasis here is quite wrong. Of course the movement does not pressure gay comrades to declare themselves; however, since there has never been any problem in this direction it is strange, to say the least, that this statement forms the first part of this particular recommendation. And certainly we are opposed to any faddist notion that it's hip to profess to be gay or bisexual. However it is not necessary to caution comrades who are gay on the implications of coming out; we're far more acutely aware of that than anyone else is. The point which is not made and is conspicuous by its absence, is that the movement should encourage gay comrades who wish to declare themselves. And while it is implicit in the plenum report, it should be made explicit that the movement will no more tolerate expressions of anti-gay prejudice than we tolerate expressions of male chauvinism.

We are not posing this document as a whole for adoption, since there may be ideas and formulations with which comrades may disagree while agreeing with the main thrust of what we are saying. What we are asking the movement to adopt is the specific recommendations concerning our role in the gay liberation movement that are contained herein.

May 15, 1972.

1 limited intervention
2. assigned work area
3. fraction formed
(4) periodic reports

— Brian explained (coming) out ← no call — (or) demand that homosexuals shout out, declare; atmosphere in movement so a homosexual can go thru the process necessary ; each person has determine

Page37
(2nd paragraph) = yes there was
("the movement should encourage gay comrades to declare themselves")= why should it
– Brian withdrew this as a criticism
(bottom) = limited intervention; assigned work area; fraction formed; periodic reports
= Brian explained coming out – no call – (or) demand that homosexuals shout out, declare; atmosphere in movement so a homosexual can go thru the process necessary ; each person has (to) determine (him or herself coming out)

Appendix p. i.

The following are the demands made in the brief presented to the federal government August 28, 1971 at the gay demonstration on Parliament Hill in Ottawa along with our comments.

1. The removal of the nebulous terms 'gross indecency' and 'indecent act' from the Criminal Code and their replacement by a specific listing of offences, and the equalization of penalties for all remaining homosexual and heterosexual acts; and defining 'in private' in the Criminal Code to mean 'a condition of privacy.'

The terms referred to apply in legal theory to gays and straights equally . In practice they are enforced almost exclusively against gays. Further, in the case of gross indecency, the police invariably press for indictable rather than summary conviction. Indictable conviction on this charge carries a maximum penalty of 14 years. In either case, <u>whether</u> <u>or</u> <u>not</u> a conviction is obtained, the defendant's name, identification and fingerprints are on permanent police files. Because such charges are nearly always made against gays or alleged gays, the person is automatically marked as a homosexual.

In our opinion the request for "a specific listing of offences..." was an error. There is no rational basis for specifically outlawing sexual offences. As in the case of the charge of "indecent assualt male", this is already covered by laws governing assault and battery. The sex of the alleged offender is obviously irrelevant.

The courts have invariably interpreted "in private" to mean, in the case of gays, two people <u>only</u> in a self-contained room. In <u>any</u> other circumstances the cops can make a bust. The brief demands that persons engaged in sexual acts be required to "make a reasonable effort to ensure a condition of privacy." In a concrete case that would mean that when a cop comes across gay people making out in a park that they be asked, as straights usually are, to simply move along.

2. Removal of "gross indecency" and "buggery" as grounds for indictment as a "dangerous sexual offender." and for vagrancy.

Previously a person convicted more than once of either of these charges could, at the whim of some judge, be sentenced to indefinite imprisonment as a "dangerous sexual offender!" This has since been rescinded. The vagrancy provision still holds. Any person convicted of either of these "offences" in a public place can be rearrested at any time under "Vagrancy E" for 'loitering' in a public place, e.g. park, beach etc. The brief pointed out that even a bank robber is not prohibited for life from ever again entering a bank!

3. A uniform age of consent for all female and male homosexual and heterosexual acts.

The age of consent for heterosexual acts varies but for homosexual acts it is 21. The TGA brief did not recommend an age because the whole concept is absurd. However if there is to be an age of consent, it should obviously be the same for gays as for straights.

This is a very important issue for it makes illegal the acts and the relationships of thousands upon thousands of gays under 21. The penalties range to a maximum of 14 years. This is largely theoretical since charges are extremely rare. But the cops will lay charges if there is a private complaint, which is a greater possibility if one of the partners is over 21 and one under the age, particularly if the parents of the younger one find out and react with the usual ignorant hystyria. In any event the very existence of this provision is a threat to gay people and provides opportunities for blackmail.

4. The Immigration Act be amended so as to omit all references to homosexuals and "homosexualism".

Prospective immigrants can be denied entry to Canada on the sole basis of being gay. As the brief notes, while the 1969 amendment made pretensions to taking the state "out of the bedrooms of the nation", present clauses in the Immigration Act not only contradict that but put the Canadian state in the bedrooms of other nations as well!

5. The right of equal employment and promotion at all governmental levels for homosexuals.

Paragraph 100 of the Royal Commission on Security recommends dismissal or denial of promotion to gay civil servants on the spurious grounds that this makes them susceptible to blackmail.

6. The Divorce Act be amended so as to omit all references to homosexual acts as grounds for divorce, moreover in divorce cases homosexuality, per se, should not preclude the equal rights of child custody.

Explanation: The reference to deletion of homosexual act(s) as grounds for divorce is motivated two ways:
1. the inclusion of homosexuality places it on a par with bestiality and rape which are in themselves defined as criminal offences in the code. Homosexuality as such is not illegal and therefore should not be included because, in legal terms, it is theoretically a non issue. The brief also argued that the concept of "fault" should be removed from divorce legislation.

The question of child custody is more obvious and more important. Unless we are to concede to reactionary arguments that gay sexuality is pathological or "immoral" there is no way in which the sexuality of a parent should be considered in the question of child custody in a divorce case.

7. The right of homosexuals to serve in the Armed Forces, and therefore the removal of provisions for convicting service personnel of conduct and/or acts legal under the Criminal Code; further the rescinding of policy statements reflecting on the homosexual.

8. To know if it is a policy of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (it is known that it is) to identify homosexuals within any area of government service and then question them concerning their sexuality and the sexuality of others; and if this is the policy we demand its immediate cessation and the destruction of all records so obtained. (This question was put to to the Solicitor General's office in February '71 by the U of T Homophile Association (UTHA); with its usual arrogance, the government has as yet to reply.

9. All legal rights for homosexuals which currently exist for heterosexuals.

10. All public officials and law enforcement agents to employ the full force of their office to bring about changes in the negative attitudes and de facto expressions of discrimination and prejudice against homosexuals.

Note: The term "straight" does not comprise nor is intended to be taken as a put-down of heterosexuals. It is simply the most common term used by gays to refer to heterosexuals. "Gay" and "straight" are generally acceptable to both, and their usage avoids both the clinical-sounding terms homosexual and heterosexual and clumsy constructs like "non-gay".